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For immediate release  
April 20, 2005

## RIO GRANDE MANAGEMENT AND WATER RIGHTS ON AGENDA FOR MAY 4 PUBLIC MEETING IN LAS CRUCES

The United States Section of the International Boundary and Water Commission (USIBWC) and the United States Bureau of Reclamation (Bureau) will conduct a public meeting on Wednesday, May 4 beginning at 5:30 p.m. at Las Cruces City Hall, 200 North Church Street, Las Cruces, New Mexico.

From 5:30 - 6:30 p.m., the Bureau will present its 2005 Annual Operating Plan for the Rio Grande Project. With the prospects for a very good spring runoff into Elephant Butte Reservoir this year, water users will very likely be allocated a full supply for irrigation by this summer.

Immediately following the AOP meeting, the USIBWC's Rio Grande Citizens' Forum (RGCF) will conduct its regular quarterly meeting. Rasool Ahadi and Barbara Brill of the New Mexico Office of the State Engineer will explain the Lower Rio Grande water rights adjudication process in New Mexico. The purpose of the adjudication is to develop an accurate and comprehensive judicial determination of all water rights within the Lower Rio Grande Basin. In the adjudication process, a judicial determination is made defining the nature and priority of individual water rights that, under New Mexico law, are a property right based on the beneficial use of water. The presentation will show the methods used in adjudication of water rights and provide the latest statistics on the progress of the Lower Rio Grande adjudication.

The USIBWC will also update the public on its plans for Rio Grande maintenance. Engineer Cesar Boisselier will explain the Five-Year Channel Maintenance Plan for the USIBWC's Rio Grande Canalization Project, which covers 105 river miles from Percha Dam, New Mexico to El Paso, Texas. The proposed maintenance activities include channel sediment removal and river bank stabilization at various areas along the project. These maintenance activities will improve water deliveries to the Rincon and Mesilla Valleys in New Mexico, El Paso's Upper Valley in Texas, and the Juarez Valley in Mexico. Selected sites have been

identified as priority for maintenance over the next five years. The USIBWC will request a permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to carry out the proposed maintenance activities.

Additionally, USIBWC staff will provide updates on studies related to long-term maintenance and management of its Rio Grande flood control projects. The Commission has been working on environmental impact statements that analyze various alternatives for managing flood control projects, including alternatives to promote environmental restoration and to raise and rehabilitate flood control levees.

There will also be a presentation by Bobby Creel of the New Mexico Water Resources Research Institute and Juan Manuel Herrera Mercado of the Ciudad Juarez Water Utility about studies related to the Mesilla Bolson, known in Mexico as the Conejos Medanos aquifer.

The Rio Grande Citizens' Forum was established by the USIBWC in 1999 to facilitate the exchange of information regarding USIBWC activities on the Rio Grande between Percha Dam, New Mexico and Fort Quitman, Texas. It is designed to bring together community members, enabling the early and continued two-way flow of information, concerns, values, and needs between USIBWC and the general public, environmentalists, irrigation districts, municipalities, and others interested in the river.

Members of the Rio Grande Citizens' Forum Board, who serve as unpaid volunteers, represent a variety of interests along the Rio Grande in west Texas and southern New Mexico. The group is co-chaired by Carlos Marin, Deputy Commissioner with the USIBWC, and Michael Fahy, Planning and Development Manager for El Paso Water Utilities.

The USIBWC-Bureau partnership for the May 4 meeting is intended to maximize the participation of members of the public interested in regional water issues. Officials expect many stakeholders interested in the AOP meeting to stay for the Citizens' Forum meeting and vice versa. By cross-promoting the meetings, each federal agency hopes to enhance its outreach to the public.

For more information:

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The United States Section of the International Boundary and Water Commission (USIBWC) and the United States Bureau of Reclamation welcome you to their joint meeting.

**2005 ANNUAL OPERATING PLAN AND  
RIO GRANDE CITIZENS' FORUM MEETINGS**

**Wednesday, May 4, 2005**

**5:30 - 8:30 P.M.**

**City Hall, Council Chambers**

**200 North Church Street**

**Las Cruces, NM**

**Agenda**

**5:30 p.m.      2005 ANNUAL OPERATING PLAN OF THE RIO GRANDE PROJECT** (Elephant Butte and Caballo Reservoirs and the Irrigation Water Supply)

- Wayne Treers, Hydraulic Engineer, Bureau of Reclamation, El Paso, Texas

**6:30 p.m.      RIO GRANDE CITIZENS' FORUM**

- Welcome & Introductions - Michael Fahy, Forum Co-Chair
- Why Do We Adjudicate Water Rights? - Rasool Ahadi, Supervisor, Lower Rio Grande Adjudication Bureau, Las Cruces Office, and Barbara Brill, Lower Rio Grande Adjudication Bureau, Santa Fe
- Mesilla Bolson and Conejos Medanos Aquifer - Dr. Bobby Creel, Associate Director, New Mexico Water Resources Research Institute and Ing. Juan Manuel Herrera Mercado, Ciudad Juarez Water Utility
- Rio Grande Canalization Project, Five-Year Channel Maintenance Plan - Cesar Boisselier, Engineer, USIBWC
- Update on USIBWC Flood Control Project Studies - USIBWC Staff
- Public Comment
- Board Discussion, Suggested Future Agenda Items

If you have a disability that you wish to self-identify confidentially that requires accommodation, please advise us ahead of time. For more information, call 915-832-4175 or e-mail [sallyspener@ibwc.state.gov](mailto:sallyspener@ibwc.state.gov).